

District: City of Newton
 School Name: Countryside Elementary School
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
 Date: June 14, 2023

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the City of Newton (the “District”), as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Countryside Elementary School with a new facility serving kindergarten through grade 5 on the existing site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the District’s Preferred Schematic.

District Information	
District Name	City of Newton
Elementary Schools	A E Angier Elementary School (K-5) Bowen Elementary School (K-5) Burr Elementary School (K-5) Cabot Elementary School (K-5) Countryside Elementary School (K-5) Franklin Elementary School (K-5) Horace Mann Elementary School (K-5) John Ward Elementary School (K-5) Lincoln-Eliot Elementary School (K-5) Mason-Rice Elementary School (K-5) Memorial Spaulding Elementary School (K-5) Peirce Elementary School (K-5) Underwood Elementary School (K-5) Williams Elementary School (K-5) Zervas Elementary School (K-5)
Middle Schools	Bigelow Middle School (6-8) Charles E Brown Middle School (6-8) FA Day Middle School (6-8) Oak Hill Middle School (6-8)
High Schools	Newton North High School (9-12) Newton South High School (9-12)
Priority School Name	Countryside Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	K-5
Year Opened	1953
Existing Square Footage	56,100
Additions	1955: 6-classroom annex addition 1986: 2-classroom annex addition 1991, 1999, 2000: addition of 4 modular classrooms and 2 offices
Acreage of Site	7.39 acres
Building Issues	The District identified deficiencies in the following areas: – Structural integrity

District Information	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mechanical systems – Electrical systems – Plumbing systems – Envelope – Windows – Roof – Accessibility <p>In addition to the physical plant issues, the District reported that the existing facility does not support the delivery of its educational program.</p>
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2022-2023 Enrollment	372 students
Agreed Upon Enrollment	Study Enrollment includes the following configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 340 students (K-5) – 465 students (expanded K-5) (Preferred Schematic)
Enrollment Specifics	Contingent upon the Board’s approval of the Preferred Schematic, the District will sign a Design Enrollment Certification for 465 students in grades K-5.
Total Project Budget – Debt Exclusion Anticipated	No

MSBA Board Votes	
Invitation to Eligibility Period	April 14, 2021
Invitation to Feasibility Study	December 15, 2021
Preferred Schematic Authorization	On June 21, 2023 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on December 13, 2023
Feasibility Study Reimbursement Rate (Incentive points are not applicable)	32.47%

Consultants	
Owner’s Project Manager (the “OPM”)	Dore & Whittier Management Partners, LLC
Designer	DiNisco Design, Inc.

Discussion

The existing Countryside Elementary School is a 56,100 square-foot facility located on a 7.39-acre site, that currently serves students in grades K-5. The original school building was constructed in 1953, with a 6-classroom annex addition constructed in 1958 and two additional annex classrooms constructed in 1986. Additionally, in 1991, 1999, and 2000 a total of four modular classrooms and two offices were constructed.

The District’s Statement of Interest (“SOI”) identifies numerous deficiencies in the existing facility associated with outdated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; building envelope; accessibility issues; and existing spaces are not conducive for delivering the District’s educational program.

As part of the Feasibility Study, the MSBA accepted the District’s request to explore options that include an expanded enrollment of the Countryside Elementary School resulting in the following study design enrollments: 340 students in grades K-5; and 465 students in grades K-5.

In conjunction with its consultants, the District performed a comprehensive assessment of the existing conditions and the educational program and received input from educators, administrators, and facilities personnel. Based on the findings of this effort, the District and its consultants initially studied (6) preliminary options that included: (2) code upgrade options, (2) addition/renovation options, and (2) new construction options, as presented below.

Option	Description of Preliminary Options
Option 1	Code Upgrade at the existing Countryside Elementary School for 340 students in grades K-5; with an estimated total project costs \$38 million.
Option 2	Addition/Renovation at the existing Countryside Elementary School for 340 students in grades K-5; with an estimated total project cost of \$65 million.
Option 3	New Construction at the existing Countryside Elementary School site for 340 students in grades K-5; with an estimated total project cost of \$56-66 million.
Option 4	Code Upgrade at the existing Countryside Elementary School for 465 students in grades K-5; with an estimated total project costs \$38 million.
Option 5	Addition/Renovation at the existing Countryside Elementary School for 465 students in grades K-5; with an estimated total project cost of \$70 million.
Option 6	New Construction at the existing Countryside Elementary School site for 465 students in grades K-5; with an estimated total project cost of \$60-72 million.

As a result of this analysis, the District determined that “Options 1 and 4” are not considered viable options for further consideration because they do not meet the District’s educational program, they require the building be vacant during construction resulting in significant transportation costs to the District, and the existing building is located within a riverfront area and wetland buffer. Additionally, the existing building is below the 100-year flood elevation and would require the first floor needing to be raised 3-feet to comply with code requirements. However, both options were included as part of the final evaluation of options for cost comparison purposes only.

The District determined that “Option 2” is not considered viable for further consideration because this option requires that the building be vacant during construction resulting in significant transportation costs to the District, the classrooms would have an east/west solar orientation, the gym would be located on the second floor which is undesirable to the District for community use and access, and the existing building is located within a riverfront area and wetland buffer. Similar to “Options 1 and 4” the existing first floor is below the 100-year flood elevation.

Subsequent to the evaluation of preliminary options, the District further developed “Option 6”, which resulted in four new iterations referred to as “Options 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D”.

The District determined “Option 6C and 6D” would not be considered for further evaluation because the proposed building for each option was not located outside of the wetlands buffer and riverfront setback, these options did not maximize efficient utilization of the site and did not

optimize outdoor space and green space. Additionally, these options failed to provide sufficient parking for teachers, staff, and visitors and do not allow for future expansion.

MSBA staff and the District agreed to explore the following (6) options for further development and consideration in the final evaluation and development of preliminary design pricing as presented below, including: (2) code upgrade options, (1) addition/renovation option, and (3) new construction options.

Summary of Preliminary Design Pricing for Final Evaluation of Options

Option (Description)	Total Gross Square Feet	Square Feet of Renovated Space (cost*/sq. ft.)	Square Feet of New Construction (cost*/sq. ft.)	Site, Building Takedown, Haz Mat. Cost*	Estimated Total Construction ** (cost*/sq. ft.)	Estimated Total Project Costs
Option 1: Code Upgrade (340 students)	56,100	56,100 \$148/sq. ft	N/A	\$2,035,826	\$10,332,464 \$184/sq. ft.	\$12,398,957
Option 3: New Construction (340 students)	65,030	N/A	65,030 \$652/sq. ft	\$12,125,306	\$54,506,148 \$838/sq. ft.	\$65,407,377
Option 4: Base Repair (340 students)	56,100	56,100 \$148/sq. ft	N/A	\$2,035,826	\$10,332,464 \$184/sq. ft.	\$12,398,957
Option 5: Addition/Renovation (465 students)	71,005	22,895 \$906/sq. ft	48,110 \$662/sq. ft	\$9,843,170	\$62,423,148 \$879/sq. ft.	\$74,907,777
Option 6A: New Construction (465 students)***	75,582	N/A	75,582 \$626/sq. ft	\$12,507,541	\$59,832,491 \$792/sq. ft.	\$71,798,989
Option 6B: New Construction (465 students)	75,582	N/A	75,582 \$626/sq. ft	\$12,507,541	\$59,832,491 \$792/sq. ft.	\$71,798,989

* Marked up construction costs

** Does not include construction contingency

*****District's Preferred Schematic**

The District has selected “Option 6A”, as the Preferred Schematic to proceed into Schematic Design because this option best supports the educational program for a 465-student enrollment, has a compact floor plan with the community spaces located near the entry of the building to allow for clear separation of community and academic spaces. Additionally, this option allows for collaboration between grades, provides a small school feel, and maximizes the site for outdoor learning and play.

As noted above, “Options 1 and 4” were not considered viable options for further consideration because they do not meet the District’s educational program, they require the building be vacant during construction resulting in significant transportation costs to the District, and the existing building is located within a riverfront area and wetland buffer. Additionally, the existing building is below the 100-year flood elevation and would require the first floor to be raised 3-feet to comply with code requirements.

“Option 3” was not selected by the District because it does not meet the needs of the District’s educational program and does not align with the District’s preferred enrollment option of 465 students.

“Option 5” was not selected by the District because this option requires the building be vacant during construction resulting in significant transportation costs to the District, the classrooms would have an east/west solar orientation, the gym would be located on the second floor which is undesirable to the District for community use and access, and the existing building is located within a riverfront area and wetland buffer. Similar to “Options 1 and 4” the existing first floor is below the 100-year flood elevation.

“Option 6B” was not selected by the District because the proposed building was not located outside of the wetlands buffer and riverfront setback and does not optimize outdoor program space and green spaces. Additionally, this option does not provide sufficient parking for teachers, staff, and visitors.

The District presented its proposed Preferred Schematic to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee (“FAS”) on May 17, 2023. At that meeting, members of the FAS discussed the following items: appreciation for the overall design of the proposed building; integration of sloped walkways and universal design principles; building orientation on the site; building massing and opportunities to break down scale with architectural elements and streamline volumes; hardscape surfaces within the back courtyard and opportunities to use permeable surfaces for drainage and stormwater management; sheltered entrances and exits; appreciation of the District's educational program and thoughtful responses to comments; upcoming school department leadership transition and continuity of educational priorities; proposed staffing of the building; brief discussion on operational budget for elementary schools; site constraints and potential challenges as it relates to current and future floodplain projections; distribution of Special Education spaces and DESE review process; and, community outreach and support for the proposed project.

MSBA staff reviewed the conclusions of the Feasibility Study and all other subsequent submittals with the District and found:

- 1) The options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope, the approach undertaken in this study was appropriate, and the District’s Preferred Schematic is reasonable and cost-effective and meets the needs identified by the District.
- 2) The District has submitted an operational budget for educational objectives and a capital budget statement for MSBA review.
- 3) The District’s Special Education submission will be subject to final review and approval by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as part of the Schematic Design submittal, which is prior to executing a Project Scope and Budget Agreement.
- 4) Subject to Board approval, the MSBA will participate in a project that includes spaces that meet MSBA guidelines, except for variations previously agreed to by the MSBA. All proposed spaces will be reviewed during the Schematic Design phase.

- 5) As part of the Schematic Design phase, the District will work with the MSBA to determine a mutually agreeable methodology to differentiate eligible costs from ineligible costs.

Based on the review outlined above, staff recommends that the City of Newton be approved to proceed into Schematic Design to replace the existing Countryside Elementary School with a new facility serving kindergarten through grade 5 on the existing site.